

TWO PATHS OF FORGIVENESS CROSS NICELY BY MARK RICCIO

Jesus instructed us to forgive those who have wronged us seventy times seventy-seven times

TRUE FORGIVENESS is the master release process, a tool that opens the energy field of the 'body' and liberates destructive energies from within. Once you actually understand Forgiveness, you will never forgive anyone again. Forgiveness is not letting another off the hook for their offenses. The root meaning of Forgiveness in Aramaic is 'to cancel, untie or let loose.' It is a tool for changing a reality in the mind.

Dr. Ryce

1st scenario: One day you walk into the office. Your boss barks at you and you go into a very uncomfortable emotional and physical posture to defend yourself. You react with anger and sadness and confusion. Your muscles are tense. You ask yourself, "what did I do to deserve this?"

2nd scenario: After work you come home. Your child asks you a question and you feel nothing and ignore him. He provokes you and you end up saying something nasty. You know your reaction is not your best and you feel terribly guilty, but what can you do to change your manner of reacting?

3rd scenario: Your wife leaves you. She moves on and gets remarried and lives happily ever after, and you are still in pain. You ask yourself "why did this happen to me?"

Can a new understanding of what *forgiveness* is, and how we attain it, help us to release ourselves from the thoughts of the cycles of behavior in the scenarios mentioned above? In other words, are our commonly held notions of forgiveness adequate to the task of our taking one hundred percent responsibility for our trespasses against others as well as the trespasses against us? Until I read two remarkable books – Sergei Prokofieff's The Occult Significance of Forgiveness and Dr. Michael Ryce's Why is this happening to me... AGAIN?!¹ ... and what you can do about it – I had practically no idea what true forgiveness was, nor how to achieve it. These authors set out to answer these questions: Sergei from the point of view of Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy; and Michael out of his own research on what forgiveness is and how it works.

In this article I would like to describe these paths to forgiveness. I think that the crossing of the two paths would fulfill an important aim that Rudolf Steiner emphasized: *differences in vocabulary should not prevent spiritual movements from benefitting from each others' work*. I personally have felt very connected to Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy and sometimes have difficulty embracing other writers' styles on spiritual topics. Years ago, after some "self-overcoming" and struggling to get through the first book of Conversations with God, I realized to my surprise that the author Walsch wrote pure Anthroposophy in an American idiom. This was an important lesson for me in open-mindedness. My experience with forgiveness was just the opposite. A friend of mine introduced me to the forgiveness work of Michael Ryce and I experienced immediately the effectiveness of the "thought-cancelling tools." I immersed myself in Michael's books and workshops. Confident of the effectiveness of his work, I nevertheless peeped into Sergei's book in order to see if this representative of Rudolf Steiner's work had anything of value to say on the topic of forgiveness. The more I read, the more value I saw in Sergei's book - to my surprise.

What is forgiveness in short? Both authors argue that forgiveness is a restoring "to the world as much goodness and love" and "to act without allowing himself to be continually disturbed by the lower memory."² Both agree that the forgiveness-step requires accessing the higher aspect of our being called in anthroposophy the Spirit-Self, or Rukha d'koodsha (from the Aramaic) by Dr Michael. The books

¹ Why is this happening to me... AGAIN?! and what you can do about it? (ISBN 1-886562-29-6) Self-published by Dr. Michael Ryce c/o Rt. 3 Box 3280 Theodosia, Missouri 65761

² Occult Significance for Forgiveness (Temple Lodge, London 1992)p. 75

complement each other nicely as Sergei presents the nitty-gritty of the Steinerian esoteric themes of forgiveness while Dr. Ryce focuses on the mechanics and detailed methods of cancelling (forgiving) fearful or hostile thoughts. Allow me to give you overviews of their work.

The Occult Significance of Forgiveness: According to Sergei, the significance of forgiveness is that it is one of our most pressing spiritual issues as well as the most important method of furthering our spiritual evolution. Our present mindset alternates between the concept of guilt and the concept of forgiveness. Guilt, or blame, is the underside of the concept of forgiveness. This battle between guilt and forgiveness reflects the dilemma in modern consciousness between our old legalistic thinking which blames and punishes, and the advent of a new moral thinking which sees the greater context.

Following Steiner's understanding of the task of our present age (1415A.D.- 3573A.D.), the Age of the Consciousness Soul,³ Sergei writes we are required - out of our own volition and consciousness - to move out of the old legalistic concepts of 'guilt' and 'rights' into a spiritualized consciousness of freedom and responsibility. Responsibility becomes the foundation of a new understanding of forgiveness, a necessary step to realizing a new level of moral awareness and evolution.

What is exactly the modern challenge we are faced with? To answer this question, Sergei gives an overview of Steiner's theory of cultural epochs and explains how each age corresponds to the petitions of the Lord's Prayer: India epoch, "name"; Persia, "kingdom" of light; Babylon, "will" of the Gods; and Greco-Roman, "daily bread." He places the fifth petition, "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," as the task of our current age of the Consciousness Soul. Starting with the fifth petition, we, as struggling human beings, may look up to our higher ego to help us with true acts of forgiveness. Real forgiveness has a power that reconnects us energetically to our community, moves karma between individuals, and helps us with our own personal struggle with evil. Sergei sees this petition as the guiding principle of our entire spiritual evolution, and this petition is:

an indication of the path of spiritual ascent which all Christian humanity will tread in the course of the second half of earthly evolution it is an occult path of cognition which leads at the same time to a more direct experience of the Christ Being and to a deeper Knowledge of him. For this alone will enable modern man gradually to become a fully conscious helper and fellow worker of Christ in the process of accomplishing his work on Earth.⁴

Thus the forgiveness work allows us not only to improve our own lot and circle of friends, but eventually to carry the karma of others as Christ, the Prince of Karma, has been doing.

The Third Chapter, *Seven Examples of Forgiveness*, relates stories about Simon Wiesenthal, a concentration camp inmate, Tsar Alexander II, Marie Steiner, Rudolf Steiner, Christian Rosenkretz, and Christ Jesus. His examples show the levels of intensity that a successful attitude of higher awareness/forgiveness can bring to even the bleakest of situations. For example, "Bill Cody" (the nickname given by American soldiers to this amazing inmate) lived in a concentration camp for years and maintained an indescribable radiance, never succumbing to a hatred of the Germans. In contrast, Sergei also presents the missed opportunities in the life of Marie Steiner whose 'letter of reconciliation' to her fellow anthroposophists fell on deaf ears. At the end of the chapter we are given the picture of the spiritual adepts, Rosenkretz and Steiner, who filled with the 'boundless forces of forgiveness,' carry the karma of others until they claim it. Thus it is for every individual who goes the way of Christ and becomes "a martyr amongst men," - a true Christian Initiate or spiritual Master.⁵

³ The Consciousness Soul Age was preceded by the Intellectual Soul age 747 B. C.-1415 A.D. which started in Ancient Greece and ended right before the Renaissance. The Intellectual Soul Age was marked by the birth of logic, scientific thinking, and art that came into movement. This time period is also called the Greco-Roman Age, since Rome continued this line of the thinking and culture. A new form of thinking started in the Consciousness Soul Age which is dynamic and able to capture outer and inner reality more exactly as we see in the painting of the Renaissance, the political philosophy of France, the materialistic science of England, and the aesthetic/romantic philosophy of Germany. We still have quite a way till the end of the Consciousness Soul Age. Non-linearity, ADD, quantum mechanics are the signs of the beginning of the new thinking of this spiritual age.

⁴ Prokofieff, p.15-6

⁵ Prokofieff, p. 39

What is this path of forgiveness? For Sergei, it is a path of creating willfully and consciously an interruption, or a “moment of oblivion in the unbroken stream of memory.” We cannot do this with our lower mind. Forgiveness requires the light of the higher ego to shine within! This higher ego has been called various names: Spirit-Self, Guardian Angel, Holy Spirit, Manas and so on. For example, when we experience an event with great antipathy and this event becomes lodged in our memory, then we require an effort of moral-will to get our ego engaged in creating in our stream of memory, a space “devoid of memory” into which the Spirit-Self energy can flow and fill in. True forgiveness is simply forgetting via the constant intervening of our higher mind. Sergei concludes that having our Spirit-Self (Guardian Angel) mediate again and again, our spiritual presence widens and becomes permeated by higher moral forces which bring us closer to an encounter with the archetype of forgiveness, the Christ.⁶

By willfully engaging in the process of bringing in the Spirit-Self energy, we learn as human beings to keep our unconscious impulses of the astral body in check. The astral body encroaches on the ego and sways us to live in the polarity of sympathy and antipathy, making us an arbitrary creature of preference. Thus when we experience a so-called negative event e.g., our boss verbally attacking us, and we react to him in an unloving manner, in such a case our astrality has caught the best of us. A person connected to their higher-self would be able to know that the boss is simply “yelling at himself,” or testing us for example. The central battle of forgiveness involves keeping our astrality at bay so that our higher self can triumph.

In spite of such a tour de force of spiritual mission, The Occult Significance of Forgiveness never actually goes into detail on how to attain this forgiveness. This is where Michael steps in, as his sole focus in his early career was asking experts how we may *in fact* forgive and finding out they did not know themselves. Sergei, unfortunately, fits into this category. Michael’s work does not have a theosophical foundation, but does come out of a spiritual source. Nonetheless, Sergei does outline nearly the same mechanics as Michael in that both emphasize the intercession of the higher spiritual energies to move on unloving thoughts.

Michael Ryce’s Cancelling Thoughts: In every *trying* situation in your life, one element is always ever present, and that is you! Every repeating pattern and emotional reaction in your life – being yelled by your boss, barking at your child, blaming your wife for leaving you – is your responsibility. “If I am in pain, I am in error” is the new maxim and is the prerequisite for healing. “For those brave enough to take this level of responsibility, restoration to our natural condition, Love, tends to follow,” writes Michael. If we accept responsibility, we then have the power to see our issues clearly and restore love to our mind and heart.

Michael has been developing tools for restoring love to our mind and cancelling thoughts which cause us pain. His commitment is impressive as he gives *free* workshops all over the country. For years he experimented and perfected a plethora of tools for improving relationships, the experience of life, and reviewing goals. He has a center in Missouri, called Heartland, a kind of forgiveness boot camp, with a summer program complete with raw food and intense seminars. His website⁷ has his free book, videos, and descriptions of his ongoing translation of the Khabouris manuscript of the Aramaic Bible.

His set of tools for forgiveness, or “thought-cancelling” as he prefers, is founded on series of universal laws which can be summed up as ‘you reap what you sow.’ To the extent you interrupt the condition of love in your mind, by sowing fear and hostility, you falsify your perceptions and begin to blame others for your own pain. In this sense the goal of life is to maintain a condition of love in your mind so your perceptions are true.

The starting point of Michael’s work is that there is only energy, and no physical matter. Because we are *the force* that holds our own energy field together, we can also bring powerful changes to ourselves on both a physical and emotional energy level. We can either choose an *integrative energy field*

⁶ Prokofieff, p.47

⁷ www.whyagain.com

in which we manifest love, joy, and wellness; or a *disintegrative field* where fear, negativity, anger, and criticism are creating decay and pain in our bodies. If reality did not function in this way, we could not have the power or freedom to change it.

The spirit of his work flows from his renewed understanding gleaned from the Aramaic way of thinking:

Due to our own ignorance we've bought into the common belief that forgiveness means 'letting them off the hook' for the terrible things they have done to us. This is a Greek concept. It comes from a mind-set that *externalized everything and attributed cause to the outside world*. This is not how *True Forgiveness* was originally presented and not even close to the original Aramaic concept!⁸

The Aramaic language contains "a technology" which accurately explained the laws of the human mind and gave ways of healing that other languages never could.

The idea that disintegration attacks our fields from within, and not from without, is very much in harmony with Sergei's anthroposophical ideas in which our goal is to draw on the higher energies of the Spirit-Self. In order to stop disintegration we first need to explore how we, *in fact*, feel and react to certain "trigger" situations; and, second, by a series of steps, need to release certain fear-based/hostile thoughts which are at the root of our pain. "The beauty of recognizing and taking charge of these powerful, primary energies is that we have a choice. We are not victims, but are the ones who initiate each cause; we put the dynamics of our lives in place and only we can change them." Because we human beings are able to have knowledge of what issues are dominant in our inner life (since our issues slip out in our words and behaviors and *projections* for all to see), we are also able to pursue each disintegrative idea and cancel it.

Theory became an actual method* as Michael turned this Aramaic understanding into a tool for cancelling hostile/fearful thoughts, his famous "forgiveness" or "reality management sheets." This forgiveness practice can be summed up as a thought-cancelling process in which our Guardian Angel/Holy Spirit (Rookha d'Koodsha* in Aramaic) is called upon to help us move on our own incorrect perceptions, fixed thoughts, and painful emotions. What are incorrect perceptions? The experience that others are causing us our internal pain! This is no philosophical game of perception, but an intense process of asking for divine intervention to help free us from our fixed expectations of seeking perfection from others. "Willingness," writes Michael, is the willingness "to embrace with love whatever you find inside yourself" that is not loving, and to take responsibility for your own anger, sadness, and fear.

How do we know where we are not in forgiveness and need to cancel a particular thought? We know where we are not in forgiveness by any reaction which is emotionally charged! Michael makes clear that the steps to cancelling thoughts (forgiveness) require consciously moving out of our fear- and hostility-filters (fear changes our perception) into a place of love by calling in the Holy Spirit or Rookha. By learning to stay in a place of love, we start to live in continual forgiveness described by Sergei. We then welcome any situation where we have a fear-based reaction because we know there is work to do!

The Thought-Cancelling Ritual: The central tool for achieving this mind frame of love and thought-cancelling is the worksheet. Michael has developed many versions of his worksheet over the years, but the basic format of the sheets has four main steps to practicing forgiveness. The steps are as follows:

- 1) describe the situation or person that is causing you anguish
- 2) state your goal or expectation from the situation;
- 3) cancel your goal by calling in the Holy Spirit and changing your fear-filter into a love-filter;
- 4) and set a new goal out of love.

⁸ Why is this happening to me... AGAIN!? p.55

* Exactly this question of a method has been a shortcoming of much of Prokofieff's work. The Occult Significance... in spite of its promising start ends with an unreadable prose. I do not recommend the rest of his book starting with Chapter Six. His work on Steiner's Philosophy of Freedom has a parallel problem of not offering a method of understanding Steiner's work. Michael luckily saves the day with his plethora of methods for making theory of forgiveness a reality.

* According to Michael, Rookha d'Koodsha is a feminine, elemental force in humans that breaks off the effect of errors and teaches us truth. "A force that which is proper for humans, the denial of which leaves us in unforgiveness."

A typical scenario for a forgiveness sheet need not necessarily include a horrible crime such as murder, the type of extreme example which not too often confronts average Americans. Jealousies between siblings, being yelled at by co-workers, and barking at our children, are everyday opportunities to practice the reality management sheets. More importantly we can use the forgiveness sheets to cancel our own very unsavory behaviors which very often have their causes in the recesses of our unconscious.

The Worksheet: The **bolded words** are in the blank spaces that need to be filled in. I used the example of my boss. Notice the main parts: first, I describe the situation and release the situation (lines 1 thru 5), second, I describe my goal and cancel my goal (lines 6 thru10). Michael designed the sheet so that each line has a purpose. Line 1 and 2 are affirmations of truth, while line 9B is an intercessionary request. The hard work comes when we release in line 6 and line 9A (our wants) where it is written “I want:” and line 11 where we set a new goal.

Worksheet[♥]

1. *My reality is made with thoughts from my own mind. As I learn to change my thoughts, my reality will change.*

A. I seem to be upset because my trigger (write the name of the person, place, thing, or event): **My Boss** causes my feelings and takes me out of Love.

Describe the situation: **my boss criticizes me, my work and my choices and I hate him** (BREATHE)

B. This triggers my feelings of: **I feel sad, angry, powerless, annoyed, disappointed**

C. My thought that causes this feeling is: **I think bosses are generally mean and never thoughtful and constructive**

D. I want to punish by: **arguing with him or avoiding him**

E. Did I learn this behavior from my family? yes/no Do I often find myself in similar situations?

2. *Punishment and blame are not my friends. I now choose to be responsible* . (BREATHE)

3. I want to feel better. I feel powerless, “stuck” only when I blame another for my reality . I pardon you for what you did not do to me and choose to forgive my reality based on this situation.

I let go of/release my situation: (read 1A aloud)

I release my feelings (read 1B),

I release my thought (read 1C),

I release my need to punish by (read 1D),

I release my need to be right. (BREATHE)

4. *I am willing to live peacefully* , *be happy* , *and go through the symptoms of healing* .

5. I choose to restore the condition of LOVE to my mind . Self-test — a LOVING thought I can feel about (1A) is: **my boss is generous** and about myself: **I am supportive**

6. What I really want or my goal is (use positive words only): I want: **respect and kindness from my boss**

7. I am not upset at this person, place, thing or event but by a reality inside of me. If I'm in Pain, I'm in Error.

8. *I take responsibility, not blame, for all of my realities. Every reality in my mind is changeable. I now choose to connect with LOVE instead of my upset* . (BREATHE)

9. A. I cancel — let go of — my need (rewrite line # 6): I want **respect and kindness from my boss**

B. *I invite the Holy Spirit (Rookha d' Koodscha)* *or Christ* *Buddha* *or* _____ *to assist me in resetting my love filters, Rakhma and Khooba* , *to incline me toward healing* , *assist me in keeping LOVE present* *and help in letting go of my painful reality* . (BREATHE)

10. I now feel: **better** and I can see that after cancelling my need(#6) that: **I am responsible for the way I feel about myself and how I act towards my co-workers when they say things that I perceive as critical**

11. I am grateful and join with the LOVE in you (write 1A): **my boss** . I acknowledge us for creating TRUTH , PERFECT LOVE , and I set a new goal with my trigger: **I am now committed to staying in a loving space when I am in his presence and take full responsibility for how I feel. I release my need to be criticized and disappointed. I am willing to listen to my boss and see what part of me is self-critical** . (BREATHE)

[♥] All kinds of worksheets can be found at <http://www.whyyagain.com/worksheets.php> including the instructions for filling them out.

Do these sheets work? Depending on the depth and severity of the blockage, a topic may be nicely dealt with with one sheet, or require several hundred. I found that several sheets sufficed when dealing with everyday problems I had with co-workers (distrust, fear of looking stupid, jealousy, need to have the last word), but it took years of doing sheets to even coming close to cancelling thoughts/wants with my parents. Successful worksheets often leave one feeling a bit sick as our mind and body are required to go through a healing process of adjustment to our newly attained frequency!

The example worksheet is actually a very ordinary situation which is very logical: I hate my boss because of his behavior, I release my expectations of him to be different, I construct a new loving goal. Normally after 5 to 10 worksheets one finds the boss no longer criticizes us and we are less resistant to doing our work. Now either the boss changed or my energy/thoughts changed. I bet it was me that changed.

Other triggers or topics may be difficult for beginners to complete with the worksheets such as “self-sabotage,” “eating to suppress rage and sadness,” “issues with men/women,” “working with cancer.” For those who are seeking a more intense experience with these sheets may require the help of someone like Julie Haverstick** who is a “forgiveness sheet intuitive” as I like to call her. Michael and Julie’s work could be called an absolute freedom endeavor, which has its own integrity, tested philosophy, and discipline. Michael’s summer program at Heartland offers a summer intensive on a whole range of themes.

Where does forgiveness lead?: Quoting generously from Steiner’s work, Sergei argues the centrality of forgiveness in the anthroposophical path and claims that it is *the* very method for attaining the highest responsibility of service to humankind. The forgiveness path has five levels according to him: 1) tolerance of others, 2) Spirit-self’s blotting out of our memory, 3) consciously taking on the karma of an individual, 4) taking on the karma of humanity, and 5) redeeming of the oppositional forces (Lucifer). There are many aspects of forgiveness that Sergei touches on. Even if some of the details or claims are hard to follow, his work is impressive as he compiles so many interesting perspectives on how forgiveness brings changes to our lives.

In my experience, the methods developed by Michael can create a lifestyle of service in forgiveness. By filling out the sheets and sharing them with others, one can start to develop an expertise in listening and understanding the subtlest of issues and life patterns. Although maybe not all of us are ready to carry “the karma of humanity,” we can start this most excellent process doing our best at cleaning up the “triggered” aspects of our personality. Julie for example has been doing the sheets for years and has quite an intuitive gift for the work. This is important to mention because one would not expect this to be the case since the work seems so grounded. Interestingly, the heartland folks never advertise nor discuss their capacities on their website or in workshops.

I enjoy watching friends complete forgiveness sheets and actually change situations in their lives. Sometimes these changes came so immediately that a skepticism followed in which the person believed that they, and the worksheet, were not the cause of change and that the sheets don’t really work. Human nature can be quite peculiar and even when presented with a simple tool to resolve difficult issues, “we know the better, and choose the worse.”

A friend of mine led her elementary school faculty in filling out some sheets. Nearly half the faculty got a headache, a sure sign that something moved by choosing love and the Holy Spirit to cancel thoughts. If the faculty got a headache from completing one forgiveness sheet, imagine the headaches that that faculty, in their lack of forgiveness, gives to their students on a regular basis.

** Julie can be reached for appointments at 417-273-4060. The work with her is life changing to say the least. One can go through very simple sheets to very complex examples. This work has its own amazing flexibility.

By making forgiveness (thought-cancelling) a regular practice at home, at work, and at school we can begin to follow the path of esoteric Christianity outlined by Sergei and Rudolf Steiner. Michael, continuing this tradition, brings esoteric Christianity into its modern expression. It is no longer necessary to enter into a monastery or occult group to practice and master a most necessary spiritual attribute for Enlightenment: that is, the ability to stay connected to our higher source so that we can remain in a loving space in all situations life presents us. It is this mission that these two paths celebrate for the future of humankind.